

Writing 303: Poetry Writing La Verne Online, Summer 2018

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Required Text (available at the ULV Bookstore or online):

Postmodern American Poetry, 2nd edition. ed. Paul Hoover

Optional Text (available at the ULV Bookstore or online):

Poetry: A Writers' Guide and Anthology, ed. Amorak Huey and W. Todd Kaneko

Writing 303, Poetry Writing, is an exploration of the work of contemporary poetry. We'll read poems by contemporary authors in our class textbook *Postmodern American Poetry* and online; considering these texts from a writer's, rather than reader's, point of view, we'll pay special attention to elements of craft: what these authors do, and how they're doing it. However, the main focus of this course is your own creative work. You will be writing, experimenting, revising, and sharing your own poems constantly during this course. Activities include writing exercises and prompts, reading, journaling, small group and class-wide discussion, small group peer review, revision, and informal poetry presentations. Writing 303 is not a lecture course--it is important that we all arrive in class prepared and ready to participate. Students must be ready to discuss their own and their peers' work, as well as be able to offer a constructive and supportive environment for that discussion.

Course Objectives

- Increase confidence in your own writing by taking creative risks in poetry
- Learn to locate elements of craft in our course readings and in your own writing
- Gain awareness of the landscape of contemporary poetic writing
- Think consciously about the aesthetic choices of yourself, your peers, and diverse published authors
- Constructively participate in a community of supportive writers
- Understand the work of poetic writing as an evolving practice involving revision

Note: Writing 303: Poetry Writing is a fully-online course. In order to participate, we'll all need to use ULV's Writing 303 course Blackboard site, as well as our class's private WordPress Poetry Writing blog.

Course Requirements:

Course Texts: In order to become writers, we must also become readers. Course readings will come from our class text, *Postmodern American Poetry*, and from handouts and links available on Blackboard. We will also be reading and sharing our own poem drafts and experiments on the WordPress class blog.

Coursework: You should anticipate spending about 10hrs/week on coursework for this class.

- **Reading:** Before we can become writers, we must first become readers. Keeping a reader-response journal for assigned readings in *Postmodern American Poetry* will ensure engagement in these class texts as well as make for lively and engaged discussion. You will also turn in three close-readings; one will respond to a poem/poet of your choice in *Postmodern American Poetry*, two will respond to a poetics essay of your choice in *Postmodern American Poetry*. Close readings should be typed, double-spaced, 1½ -2 pages in length, and respond to the reading in such a way that shows your understanding of and your interaction with the poem or poetics being enacted. I'm looking for your response to the reading *as a poet*--what about the poem/essay can help you write better poetry/think differently about the work of a poem/inspire you creatively?
- **Experiments & Exercises:** I will provide you with exercises and experiments to help jumpstart the creative process and inspire risks in your writing. Hopefully, you will find yourself inspired by many of these short exercises. You will share your early poem drafts and experiments on our WordPress blog, as well as have the opportunity to develop your exercises into more fully-realized poems and share them with your peers during peer review Workshop.
- **Peer Review Workshop:** We will use the functions on Blackboard to read and respond to each other's work. The feedback you receive through peer responses and workshop, as well as instructor feedback, will help you revise your work. During peer workshops, you will be asked to share your poem, and to listen attentively to your peers' feedback and suggestions. Workshop participation consists of responding thoughtfully to the poem(s) under discussion. In addition to your instinctive initial response to a poem, you must also ask: what is this poem trying to do? when/where/how does it succeed, and how might it succeed even better? Through workshop discussions we will learn to constructively critique each other's work, receive feedback graciously and appropriately, and be exposed to new ideas for writing and revision.
- **Participation:** We are all busy people, but I expect you to check in to class at least twice a week to make sure you're staying on track: keeping your Reader Response Journal up to date, contributing to class-wide and small-group discussions, sharing your Poem Drafts and Experiments on our WordPress blog, etc.
- **Literary Participation:** Part of being a writer is participating in the writing community. We have our own classwide community in Writing 303, but you'll also learn to participate in the larger worldwide literary community by watching/listening to poetry readings online (or in person in your local community), exploring poetry on social media, and considering your own work in the context of the community you've discovered.

Final Project: revision & portfolio: There is no final exam; instead, you'll turn in a portfolio including a selection of poems you've written and revised this term, along with a brief prose introduction. .

How to reach me: The best way to get in touch with me is by email: gkaplan@laverne.edu . I may not respond immediately, but I will respond as soon as I can, and always within 24 hours. If you have a general question another student may be able to answer more quickly, post on the Course Q & A Forum. If you need technical help, **contact ULV BlackBoard Assistance.**

Grade components & breakdown:

- 10% **Reading Journal** (ongoing)
- 20% **Poem drafts & Experiments** (ongoing)
- 10% **Workshop Poems** (4x term)

- 15% Workshop & Small Group Discussion** (4x term)
- 15% Informal Ongoing Discussions & Posts** (ongoing)
- 10% Literary Participation** (ongoing)
- 20% Revision & Final Portfolio** (final project)

To determine your final grade course, I'll use the following scale: an A grade is 93-100%, an A- is 90-92%, B+ for 87-89%, B is 83-86%, B- is 80-82 pts, and so on. I will offer occasional extra credit opportunities, so if you miss assignments you may have the opportunity to make some of that credit up later on.

Participation:

Because participation is integral, not checking in to class and participating regularly not only causes your work but also the work of your fellow students to suffer. Remember: your voice is needed and wanted.

Late/Missing Work:

- Be aware that your timeliness impacts others' opportunities for participation and discussion: poems for Workshop and Revision, and posts for Classwide and/or Small Group Discussion **may not** be accepted after the due date. Plan ahead and be sure to keep in touch with the professor and your group members if you expect to run into trouble.
- Other work (Journal entries, Poem Drafts and Experiments) may be accepted after the due date at the professor's discretion, but unexcused tardiness will be penalized and a pattern of turning in late assignments will be negatively reflected in your grade.

Plagiarism:

I assume this won't be an issue, as all our writing is personal and unique. Regardless, understand that 'plagiarism' means using another's words, ideas, or data as one's own. Avoid exact duplication of another's work in any form: Internet documents, someone else's ideas, facts that aren't common knowledge, or even paraphrases of spoken or written words. Ignorance does not excuse plagiarism. (Plagiarism can result in anything from a failing grade on a paper to failure of the course.) If you have any questions about what may or may not constitute plagiarism, please bring them up in class so we can all learn the answer.

Conduct:

We're all grown-ups, so this should be no problem. But remember that university course-work requires an open exchange of ideas, with the classroom as the space of interaction. The demonstration of mutual respect between teachers and students includes being enthusiastic and open-minded, participating in class, and adapting to new learning styles, trying on new ideas, and supporting our fellow students as we all grow and learn. Positive communication requires that we state our positions clearly and with support/evidence, offer suggestions that will be helpful, and have disagreements with tact. Most importantly, we must always listen carefully to one another whether or not we agree.

Students with Disabilities:

If you have a documented disability, please let me know and we'll discuss accommodations.